

REMARKS

The Office Action dated January 8, 2004, has been received and carefully noted. The amendments made herein and the following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

As a preliminary matter, Applicant appreciates the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 7, 8 and 12-15 of the present application.

Claims 7 and 12-14 have been amended to be in independent form including all the limitations of independent claims 1 and 11, respectively. Claims 1-2, 5-6, and 11 have been cancelled without prejudice. Applicants submit that the amendments made herein are fully supported in the specification and the drawings as originally filed, and therefore no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 7, 8 and 12-15 are pending in the present application and are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 5 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nohira et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,891,519, "Nohira") in view of Matsuda (U.S. Patent No. 4,629,882, "Matsuda"). In addition, claims 2 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nohira in view of Matsuda, further in view of Venkatachalam (U.S. Patent No. 5,724,967, "Venkatachalam"). As mentioned above, claims 1-2, 5-6, and 11 have been cancelled without prejudice, and therefore the rejection with respect to these claims are now moot.

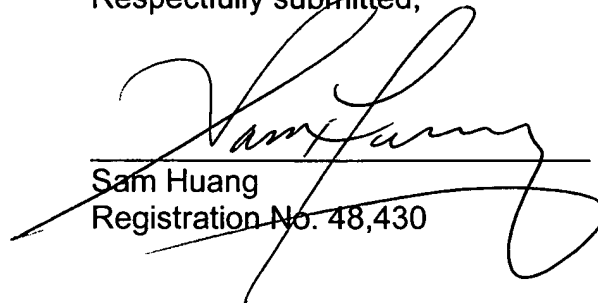
In view of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that each of claims 7-8 and 12-15 is allowable and that this application be passed to issue.

If for any reason, the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the

Applicant's undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper has not been timely filed, the Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300 referencing Attorney Docket No. 103213-00020.

Respectfully submitted,



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